

February 23, 2017

Alice Evans

Appropriations – DDS

Thank you all and thanks to all the members who will be reading my testimony. I am here to speak in opposition to the proposed cuts to DDS in the Governor's budget.

My name is Alice Evans, I live in Stratford and am the legal guardian for my daughter Diane Brown. Diane is intellectually challenged and currently a resident at HRC in Newington. Diane's former residence was the Grosso Regional Center, where she received Aquatic Therapy at the pool at Grasso.

Diane's DDS team devised an aquatic therapy plan to help her move better, bear weight, and walk.

When this therapy started Diane's arms and shoulders were tight and stiff - fixed close to her body and she could not bear weight to even do transfers.

The aquatic pool is at a bath temperature of 90 degrees with a ramp for easy entry. In this sunny quiet setting with only music playing, I observed Diane blossom.

I saw Diane loving to go into the pool while getting the needed therapy. While in the pool Diane showed no behavioral issue like yelling or hand in mouth. Even with floating plus the warmth of the pool relaxing her muscles, the loosening of her shoulders was hard; she did complain at first -- but not for long -- once she understood through repetition and felt the benefit of moving.

Most impressive was the weight bearing. These amazing therapists had Diane going from sitting position to bearing weight by standing with assistance. When I saw Diane slowing progressing to taking steps, I cried. Aquatic therapy was working where other therapy had not. Grasso and the pool were closed by the Governor September, 2016. This pool was the only aquatic therapy pool in the state where Diane could receive aquatic therapy due to her age and incontinent issues.

I am urging you and your sub-committee to find the money for aquatic therapy.

In Fairfield County --Open Grasso for respite & dental plus the pool for aquatic therapy.

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In the north region, where my daughter resides, build a smaller pool for aquatic therapy. Use grant money. Find wasteful entertainment money and get the therapy to those individuals who need it the most.

**Be the champion for aquatic therapy.**